



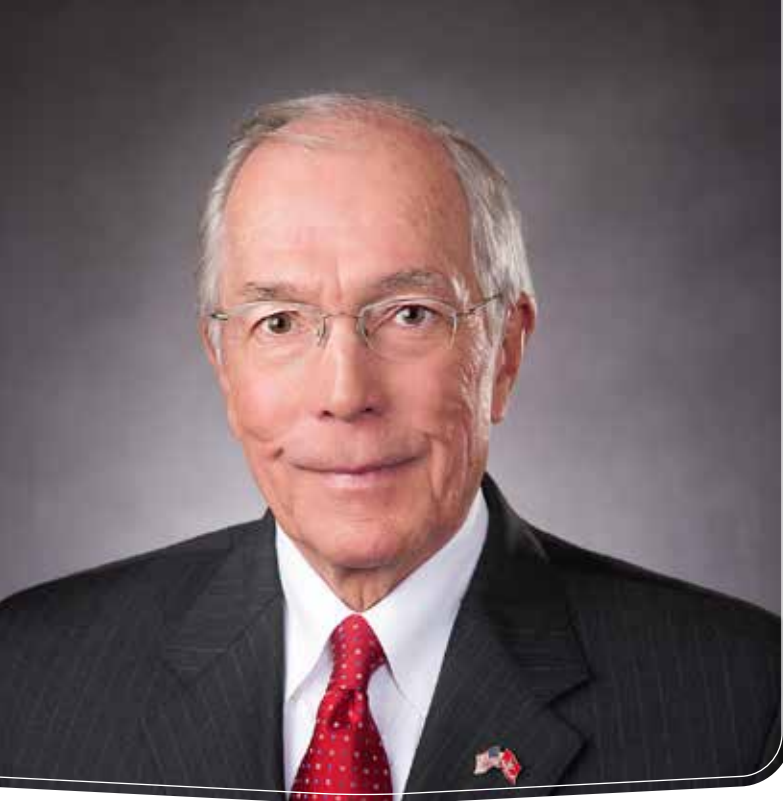
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC HEIGHTS

— STATE HISTORIC SITES UPDATE —

2019

NEW ADDITIONS
**RECOVERING FROM
HURRICANE HARVEY**
UPDATES FROM
AROUND THE STATE



THC CHAIRMAN JOHN L. NAU, III ON HISTORIC SITES

In 2007, the Texas Legislature transferred 18 state historic sites to the Texas Historical Commission. In the subsequent 10 years we have operated these sites, we have done a lot more than simply maintain and preserve them. We have developed these state assets into significant Texas travel destinations and important centers for immersive history education.

In the last biennium, our agency's vision for preserving and showcasing our state's most precious historic landmarks experienced unprecedented opportunities and challenges—but the biennium ultimately gave us a chance to shine like never before.

In 2017, the legislature added to our family of sites with the transfer of the French Legation property in Austin. After an extensive planning process, the agency is moving forward with the restoration of what some claim is the oldest house in Austin. Ultimately, the site, just a few blocks away from downtown, will contribute to one of Austin's premiere cultural districts.

Later in 2017 our sites were severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey. In fact, Fulton Mansion in Rockport, the historic home of a prominent 19th century business owner and engineer, was situated directly in the monster hurricane's landfall. Built to last, the mansion still stands and is now working toward full restoration. Like our coastal communities, the Fulton Mansion is a symbol of Texas perseverance.

Not even a year later, we achieved one of our long held, most ambitious goals—the creation and opening of a state-of-the-art visitors center and museum at San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site, west of Houston. The site

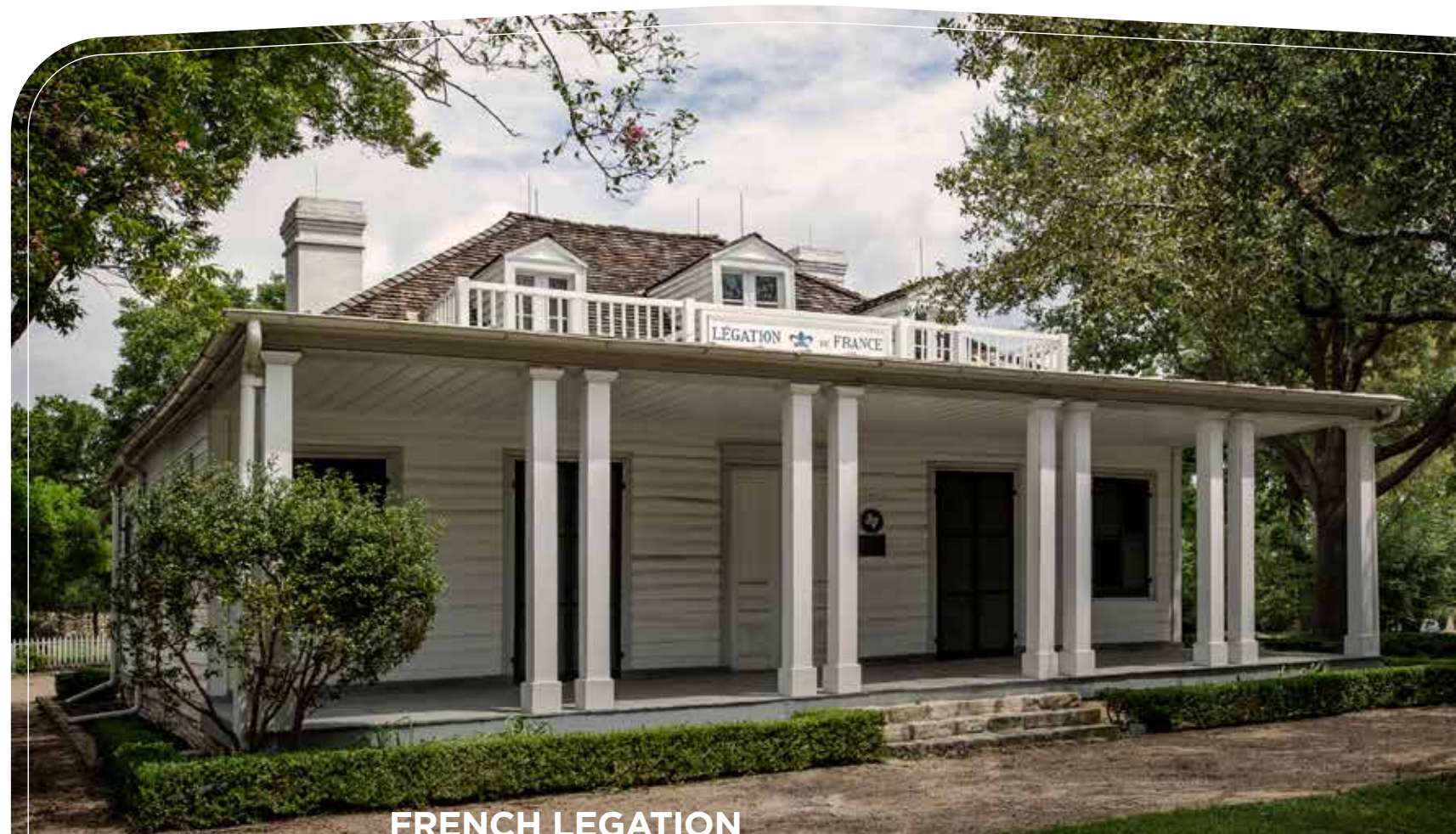
helps to tell the story of Austin's colony and the Runaway Scrape, an untold but vitally important chapter in Texas history. Exciting exhibits bring these and other stories to life, and plans are underway for construction of a townscape evocation that will allow new generations of Texans to learn about and appreciate the Texas mystique.

Throughout all this, we continued to improve each of the agency's state historic sites and their unique programming in a successful effort to attract tourists, students, and anyone else who loves Texas history. It's a big audience that stretches around the world, and our Historic Sites Division provides a never-ending stream of content, programming, and experiences for everyone.

From unique stargazing opportunities at Fort Griffin and Caddo Mounds, to our expanded historic foodways programming at Casa Navarro, Landmark Inn, Fort McKavett, and Fort Griffin, to exciting photos and videos from all our sites shared across our global social media audience, our state historic sites include the best of all things Texan.

The document you hold is an overview of our work here in the last biennium. I know that you will enjoy reading about the progress we've made with your generous support, and I look forward to working with you in the upcoming session as we continue to preserve these Texas treasures.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



FRENCH LEGATION

Bienvenue à la Maison

During the last legislative session, Gov. Greg Abbott signed into law House Bill 3810 to transfer Austin's historic French Legation to the THC.

The French Legation opened in 1841 as a private home for French chargé d'affaires to the Republic of Texas, Alphonse Dubois, after France recognized the Republic of Texas as a sovereign nation. Owned by the State of Texas since 1949, the French Legation has been on the property inventory of the Texas Facilities Commission and managed by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas

as a historic site since opening to the public in 1956.

The State also allocated \$1.56 million in emergency deferred maintenance funds to address the building's most pressing structural problems.

Preparations for the preservation work began immediately after the transfer, requiring the site's temporary closure. The French Legation will reopen to the public in 2019, once essential work is completed.



French Legation is located in the Texas Hill Country Trail Region.

visitfrenchlegation.com

FULTON MANSION

The Road to Recovery

Since its construction on the Rockport beach in 1877, Fulton Mansion has survived a number of significant hurricanes. Despite being at landfall in August 2017, the mansion persevered again through Hurricane Harvey.

But along with the rest of its home community, Rockport-Fulton, the site experienced great damage. Its roof was ripped off by the storm, allowing water to pour inside. Airborne debris strikes damaged the exterior. Extensive water damage forced the mansion's closure, yet another economic impact to the devastated area.

But work on the mansion has proceeded efficiently and effectively. Damage from moisture infiltration has been assessed, and all upholstered furniture, textiles, and other vulnerable items have been moved to secure curatorial facilities. The mansion is now open for hard hat tours and regular visiting hours six days a week.

Staff continues to work with FEMA to obtain federal funds to complete the restoration work and ready the mansion for the return of its collection. The THC sees Fulton Mansion as a symbol of Texas' determination in the face of natural disasters, and it will be restored and returned to service as quickly as possible.



Fulton Mansion is located in the Texas Tropical Trail Region.

visitfultonmansion.com



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2



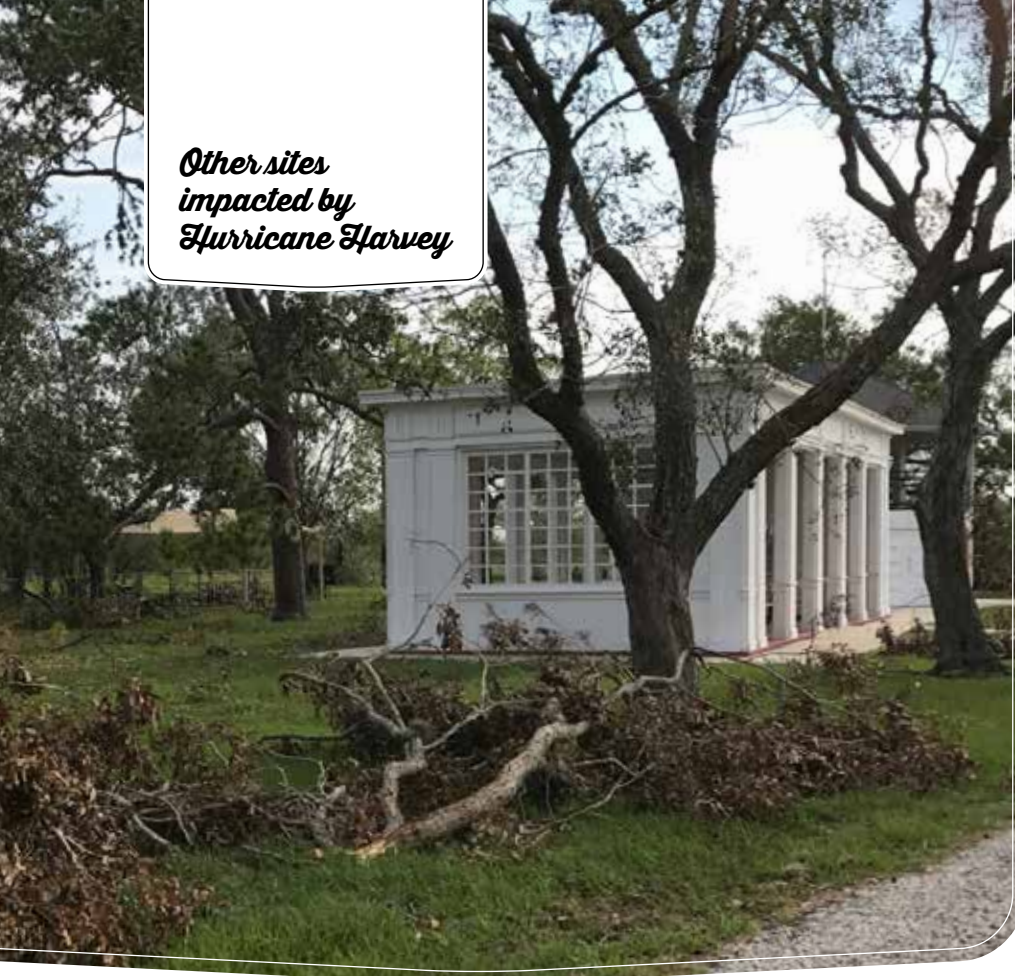
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1. Roof, tile, and window damage from high winds
2. Recovered furniture in secure storage
3. Historic document preservation
4. Workers clear debris



4

*Other sites
impacted by
Hurricane Harvey*



FANNIN BATTLEGROUND

At Fannin Battleground, Hurricane Harvey significantly impacted the landscape, damaged the bandstand, and tore off part of the caretaker's house roof. All repairs have been completed.



Fannin Battleground is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.

visitfanninbattleground.com



LEVI JORDAN PLANTATION

In Brazoria, Levi Jordan Plantation received minor damage—many trees and limbs were knocked down, along with the wooden pumphouse—but the site was not severely impacted.



Levi Jordan Plantation is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.

visitlevijordanplantation.com

VARNER-HOGG PLANATION

At Varner-Hogg Planation, the adjacent Varner Creek overflowed its banks, flooding the grounds and damaging several support structures. The site manager worked with local officials around the clock for nearly two weeks to help protect the area from catastrophic flooding. His assistance providing emergency access and his concern for neighbors resulted in strengthened community relations.



Varner-Hogg Plantation is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.

visitvarnerhoggplantation.com



SABINE PASS BATTLEGROUND

Hurricane Harvey's largest impact on agency property was to the seawall at Sabine Pass Battleground, reported to be under a foot of water during the storm. The site experienced soil erosion and washout adjacent to the seawall. The damage has been assessed and engineering is in progress.



Sabine Pass Battleground is located in the Texas Forest Trail Region.

visitsabinepassbattleground.com





◀ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Garrett Donnelly*, Jim Bruseth*, Bryan McAuley, Lareatha Clay, Mark Wolfe, Comptroller Glenn Hegar, John L. Nau III*, Senator Lois Kolkhorst, Pete Peterson*, Daisy White*, John Crain*, Catherine McKnight*, Earl Broussard*
*THC Commissioners

1. San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site Museum
2. Museum reception and gift shop
3. Map plaza

SAN FELIPE DE AUSTIN

The Old 300 Would be Proud

The THC doesn't just maintain and repair its sites. It also develops them into modern educational resources and popular tourist destinations.

Hundreds gathered on a bright, sunny afternoon last April to hear state and local officials dedicate San Felipe de Austin's new 10,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art museum, planned for nearly a decade.

The new facility tells the story of the founding of the Republic of Texas, with highly interactive exhibits featuring dynamic graphic elements and animations. Period and site-specific artifacts from San Felipe are displayed.

San Felipe de Austin served as the capital of Stephen F. Austin's colony in Mexican Texas, founded in 1823. In the 1830s, it was the second largest community in Texas and was visited by almost every Texas luminary of the era.

Settlers to Austin's Colony came to the town to initiate the land grant process, and in the fall of 1835 San Felipe de Austin served as the capital of a provisional Mexican state of Texas as political conflict turned to revolution.

As Mexican troops approached, the fleeing settlers burned their homes to the ground to deny them

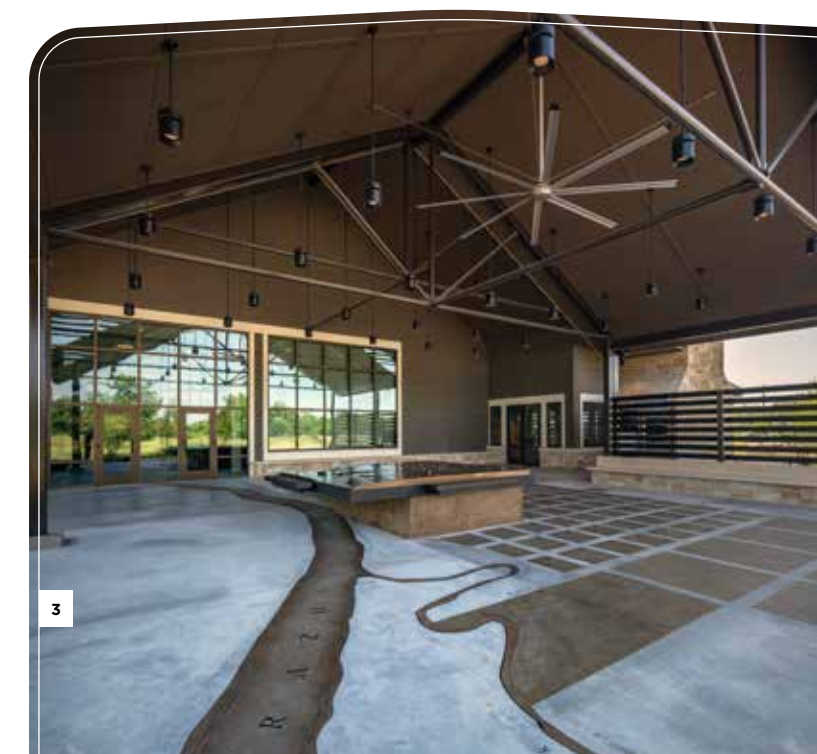
to the enemy—this was “the Runaway Scrape.”

Curatorial staff accepted new collections for San Felipe de Austin, including 37 historic and site-associated objects from the Friends of San Felipe and 17 boxes of archeological collections donated by several families. Work by archeologists at San Felipe de Austin is revealing new information on the life, living styles, and building techniques of the colonists that will be incorporated into future programs and interpretations.



San Felipe de Austin is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.

visitsanfelipedeastin.com





State of The Art Interpretation

Along with unique historical objects like a field desk that belonged to the Father of Texas, a preserved cabin built by an Austin Colony pioneer, and a cast iron printing press, the SFdA exhibits also showcase interactive media and two short films. Touch screen exhibits open up infographics that visitors can explore and learn more about this dramatic untold story.

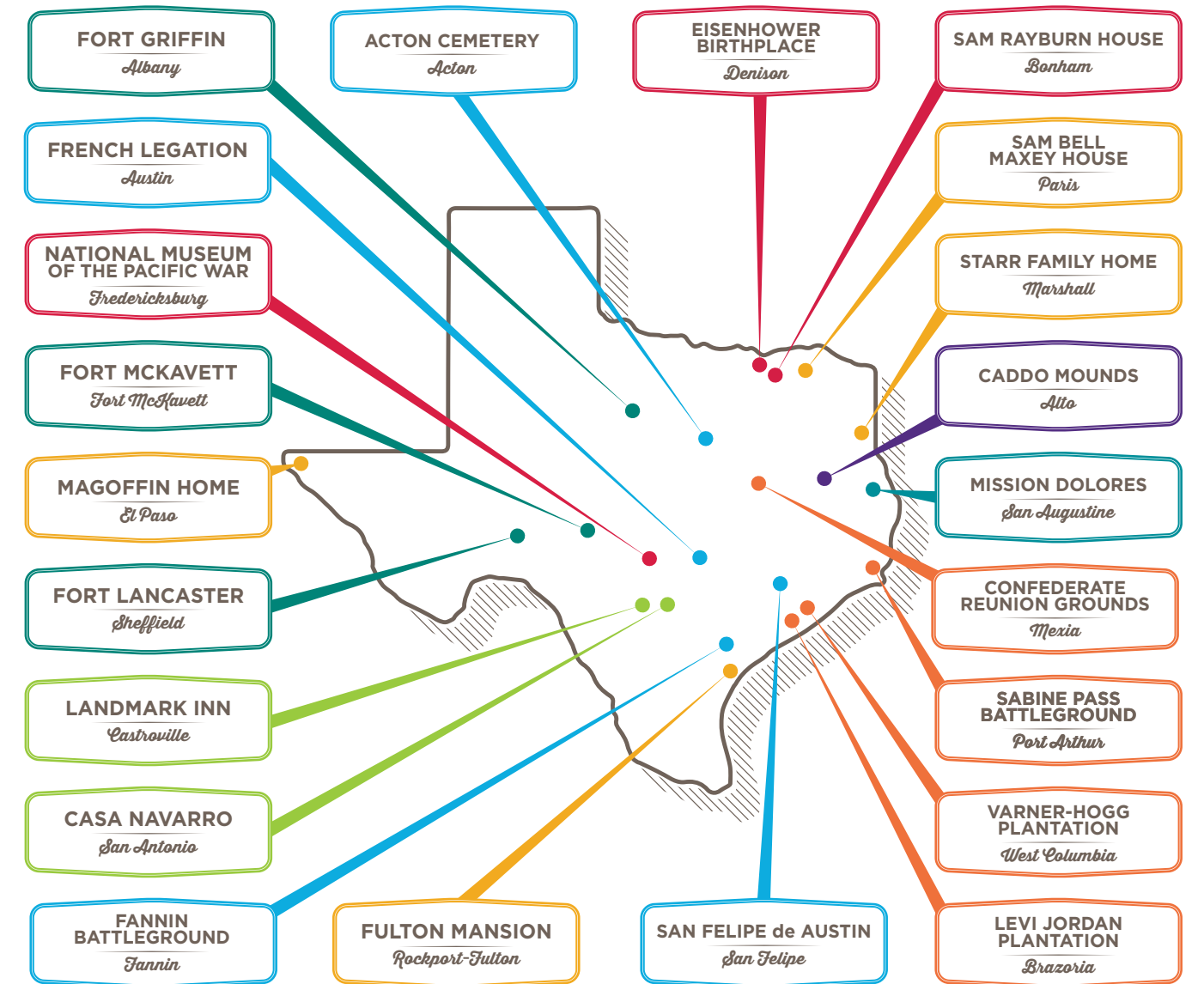
The historic site serves school field trips, group tours, and families and tourists—from Texas and beyond—anxious to learn more about this pivotal time in the state's history. The stories of San Felipe de Austin are deeply rooted in connections to all of the other major Texas Revolution sites including the Alamo, the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site, and the historic towns of Gonzales and Goliad.

1. Log cabin exhibit
2. Interactive display in cabin
3. Patrons and interactive wall display

4. Child and printing press exhibit
5. Children and interactive town hall exhibit



OUR 22 STATE HISTORIC SITES



Telling the story of Texas through the ages



*Updates from
around the state*



SAM BELL MAXEY HOUSE

The staff's meticulous research resulted in the detailed restoration of the Sam Bell Maxey House library, dining room, hallway, and parlor. It includes rich period elements to restore the interiors created by Marilda Maxey and her daughter. The THC also constructed an office structure at the site.



This site is located in the
Texas Lakes Trail Region
visitsambellmaxeyhouse.com

CASA NAVARRO

The February 2017 celebration of the National Historic Landmark designation and birthday of José Antonio Navarro at Casa Navarro highlighted the property in Texas and American history. A guidebook is available for the site, and a conceptual site plan details how adjacent land could be utilized to improve operations, visibility, and assist in creating a new downtown destination.



This site is located in the
Texas Independence Trail Region
visitcasanavarro.com



STARR FAMILY HOME

The restoration and interpretation of the Starr Family Home's service wing was completed. The goal was to return back-of-house spaces to their period configuration and appearance, engaging visitors in programming that tells the stories of African American hired servants whose hard work and ingenuity supported the Starr family's lifestyle. This exciting interpretation will include a foodways and domestic skills program.



This site is located in the
Texas Forest Trail Region
visitstarrfamilyhome.com



LANDMARK INN

The Landmark Inn debuted a new permanent exhibit in April 2017. The site's new guidebook is available in the Vance Hotel's new museum store space, which offers a taste of the thriving general store that provisioned travelers on the Old San Antonio Road. Landmark Inn has hosted a successful set of seasonal foodways programs and classes, highlighting the restored 1850s open hearth kitchen.



This site is located in the
Texas Hill Country Trail Region
visitlandmarkinn.com



EISENHOWER BIRTHPLACE

Schematic design was completed for the Eisenhower Birthplace's new entrances and statue plaza. The design will unify the site, provide improved accessibility, and offer safer pedestrian access. New interpretive signs will share the history of the working-class community associated with one of our nation's great heroes. The Friends of the THC created a phased fundraising strategy developed with local community stakeholders to support the project.



This site is located in the
Texas Lakes Trail Region
visiteisenhowerbirthplace.com

SAM RAYBURN HOUSE

The Sam Rayburn House opened its new visitors center exhibit in April 2017 in conjunction with the museum's 42nd anniversary. The exhibit features the life of "Speaker Sam." Interpretive panels were installed on the grounds, explaining the farm, garage, tractor shed, and barn. A new exhibit featuring Mr. Sam's fully restored vehicles and the changing face of agriculture in the mid-20th century opened in the Fall of 2018.



This site is located in the
Texas Lakes Trail Region
visitsamrayburnhouse.com





NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

The National Museum of the Pacific War tells the history of WWII's Pacific Theatre through media-rich presentations, meaningful testimonials, and historically significant artifacts. The site teaches that the Pacific Theater was not a sideshow to the war in Europe, but a conflict that affected the whole course of world history.

The Japanese Garden of Peace was a gift from the people of Japan, in honor of the friendship between Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Togo. The Garden was first dedicated and opened to the public in 1976. Now a \$400,000 renovation has restored the garden to the Japanese architects' original design.

In April 2018, the National Museum of the Pacific War held a rededication ceremony for the restored Japanese Garden of Peace, featuring a Japanese drum performance, a tea ceremony, and attendance by Japanese and U.S. government officials.

One of the museum's most popular venues is the Pacific Combat Zone, a unique two-acre indoor/outdoor exhibit. After an \$8 million renovation to the complex including a new and expanded battlefield for the popular WWII living history program, a new retail/ticket center, and a scale map of the Pacific Theater, the exhibit is now open to all visitors. Exhibits include the PT 309 Boat which features video displays covering PT Boat missions, an oral history kiosk, and the history of PT 309. The Theatre Ballistic Missile (TBM) exhibit allows guests to see a TBM Avenger getting ready for a mission, along with tabletop games stationed in front of the plane.



This site is located in the
Texas Hill Country Trail Region
pacificwarmuseum.org



LEVI JORDAN PLANTATION

An important project under development at the Levi Jordan Plantation in Brazoria County will include construction of a state-of-the-art museum as well as site preservation and development to tell the story of enslaved African Americans, highlighting their role in the South's economy and cultural development, from slavery to building Texas after the Civil War. The overall scope of the Levi Jordan Plantation

museum project was reevaluated and rescoped to meet the agency's needs and goals to make it a prime heritage tourism destination. There is ongoing archeology at the site to learn more about the enslaved people and the life on the plantation.



This site is located in the
Texas Independence Trail Region
visitlevijordanplantation.com



FORT MCKAVETT

In January 2018, Fort McKavett reopened its new and improved visitors center. Fresh exhibits feature audio, video, and interactive experiences and highlight the American Indians who occupied the region, as well as the Spanish and Mexican history of west-central Texas and the

founding of the fort. They also provide information about the civilian occupation of the fort after the Army abandoned the post in 1883.



This site is located in the
Texas Forts Trail Region
visitfortmckavett.com

Friends Groups

There are 13 active Friends groups that provide operational, promotional, and programming support through their volunteer boards and general membership. Ten of those groups operate as private nonprofit organizations, while three operate under the new fiscal sponsorship agreement with the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission.

In the last biennium, Friends groups assisted historic sites in meeting operational and capital improvement needs. Their fundraising assistance has helped support projects such as construction of the San Felipe de Austin Historic Site Museum, constructing the Caddo grass house at Caddo Mounds Historic Site, coordinating annual programs with descendants of the Caddo Nation, living history and military history re-enactment events, holiday events, and support for maintenance and providing restoration funds. Friends group members often take the lead in promoting historic sites to their local community leaders and elected officials.

CURRENT ACTIVE HISTORIC SITES FRIENDS GROUPS ARE:

- Casa Magoffin Compañeros
- Fort Lancaster Company
- Friends of Caddo Mounds
- Friends of Casa Navarro
- Friends of the Confederate Reunion Grounds
- Friends of Fort Griffin
- Friends of Fort McKavett
- Friends of Fulton Mansion
- Friends of Landmark Inn
- Friends of Mission Dolores
- Friends of Sam Bell Maxey House
- Friends of San Felipe de Austin
- Varner-Hogg Volunteers



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

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Major capital projects completed to date to enhance the visitor experience

Totals below include privately raised funds and other state appropriations.

Interpretive Centers and Exhibits

Caddo Mounds	\$1.7M
Fort Griffin	\$1.5M
Fort Lancaster	\$1.5M
Fulton Mansion	\$700K
Magoffin Home	\$1.5M

Exhibits

Casa Navarro	\$406K
Confederate Reunion Grounds	\$24K
Fannin Battleground	\$140K
Landmark Inn	\$210K
National Museum of the Pacific War	\$1.3M
Varner-Hogg Plantation	\$250K

Historic Restorations

Casa Navarro	\$586K
Fannin Battleground	\$500K
Fulton Mansion	\$2.65M
Landmark Inn	\$1.8M
Levi-Jordan Plantation	\$1.1M
Magoffin Home	\$930K
Sam Bell Maxey House	\$1.4M
Sam Rayburn House	\$1.2M
Starr Family Home	\$860K

Museum and Exhibits

San Felipe de Austin	\$12.5M
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Visit us at **texashistoricsites.com** and on social media.

